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The Credibility of Communicators as Leaders in the Peasant Movement

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Abstract

One important aspect in the peasant movement is the existence of a leader figure. The peasant movement needs a communicator or leader figure with strong credibility and therefore, peasants want to join in the protest. A horrendous peasants protests was the self grave action carried out by the STTB peasants (The United Telukjambe Peasants Association). The peasant protest movement of STTB began when they were involved in a conflict with PT Pertiwi Lestari. PT Pertiwi Lestari claimed that the rice field land occupied and cultivated by STTB peasants was their own land in 2010 and the company asked the peasants to move from the rice field land. The research purpose is to identify the credibility of the STTB leaders in the peasant mobilization. The research is a qualitative research with case study approach. Data collected by interviewed three STTB leaders and three STTB peasants. The research findings show that the STTB leaders have initial credibility, i.e. the credibility related to social status and derived credibility, the credibility related to the leaders' competencies. Beside that, the leader of STTB also has character, competence, personality and dynamis. STTB leaders are generous, close to STTB members, and open-minded.

Keywords: Credibility, Leader, Peasant Organization, Peasant Protest

1. Introduction

Land conflicts occur in agrarian countries and these have contributed much to peasant protest movements (Choudhury 2013, Gao 2015, Lund & Rachman 2016). The peasant movement is a protest from the peasants which aims to demand a reform and provide them welfare. Scott (1975) states that the peasant movement is a kind of the peasants' anger voice for social injustice they have been experiencing. It occurred to the peasant movement in Karawang District, West Java Province, Indonesia. It occurred when PT Pertiwi Lestari suddenly claimed that the peasants' occupied land became its own property unilaterally. The peasants became restless particularly since they experienced intimidation and discrimination from the company. The peasant organization, i.e. STTB (United Telukjambe Peasants Association), was established and the peasants in Telukjambe, Karawang District, West Java

Province were invited to join to the organization and make protests. Hundreds of the peasants joined and became members of the association. They carried out protest actions, including long march from Karawang District to Greater Jakarta and the self grave action in front of the State Palace (Pratiwi, et al. 2019¹).

As looking at the incidents, what made the peasants willing to join the STTB and carry out tens of kilometers long march and the extreme action? Something does not make sense to us. The researcher assumes that the leaders of the organization have good communication skills and therefore the communication established with the STTB peasants as the members is well established. Communication is the most basic thing in human life. This is because communication is an inseparable phenomenon in the establishment of a community or society to share information and so common goals can be achieved (Pehrson, et al. 2015). The success of communication depends on those who are delivering the message, i.e. the communicator. The credibility of the communicator will determine the success of the message delivering process. Credibility is the ability that the communicator has and so the audiences believe in the messages conveyed (Liliweri 2010). It can be said that the audiences will listen and believe the information that the communicator convey if the communicator has certain credibility.

De Vito (2012) explains that there are three types of communicator credibility, i.e. initial credibility, derived credibility, and terminal credibility. The initial credibility is a communicator credibility that shows the social status and position of the communicator. Moreover, the derived credibility is a communicator credibility related to intellectual abilities and competencies that the communicator possesses. Finally, the terminal credibility is a mixture of the two previous of credibility, i.e. initial and derived credibility. Moreover, Beebe & Beebe (2005) state that a communicator must have competence, honesty, dynamism and charisma. McCroskey & Young (1981) state that there are five sources of communicator credibility, i.e. competence, character, intention, personality, and dynamism. The competence is the mastery of issues that the communicator is discussing. The character shows the communicator's personality whether he is strong or tolerant in principle. The intention indicates whether the things the communicator has been conveying have good intentions or not. The personality indicates whether the speaker has a warm and friendly personality. Finally, the dynamism shows whether the things he delivers are interesting or otherwise boring. The role of the leaders is very important because they determine the success of an organization both in companies (Goren 2018), in schools or education (Ruslan et al. 2020), in government organizations (Mansyuri 2019), non-governmental Organizations (Mbogoh et al. 2019) and campus organization (Namaganda, et.al. 2018). Likewise in the peasant organization movement, the role of the leaders is very important (Borras et al. 2008, Ghildiyal 2008, McKeon 2009, Nayak 2014, Zhang 2015).

Based on previous researches, peasant resistance movements are usually born due to the organization carried out by one or several prominent figures, as those in India (Das 1982). Indian peasants at the local level are under the leadership of wealthy peasants or local elites. Moreover, at the national level, these peasants are led directly by Mahatma Gandhi, the intelligent and brave national figure. Gandhi was a leader with high credibility. He was lauded and gained wide support, particularly for areas in India where he had campaigned (Brown 1974, Kumar 1983). Otherwise, it differs from the peasant leader in Russia, i.e. Pugachev. He was a defector, a fugitive as well as a figure who had no status, no followers and no organization as well as no power (Longworth 1975). However, his dark background did not prevent him from defending the interests of peasants. He succeeded in embracing peasants to fight against injustice. Finally, what about the STTB leaders? Do the STTB leaders have the credibility and so they are able to persuade peasants to join the organization and make protest? For this reason, this research was conducted with the aim of finding out the credibility of the leaders in the organization's peasant protest movement.

2. Method

The research is a qualitative research with case study approach. Yin (2009) states that case study research is a study of a case in real life, in a contemporary situation or setting. The type of case study in this research is a single embedded case study. In this research the chosen case was a protest movement that the STTB peasants had been carrying out over the land grabbing and eviction. It could be said that this case was a special case when it could attract the attention of Indonesian President Joko Widodo to participate in resolving this case. This case was also categorized as an extreme case because the STTB's collective actions to demand the return of their land were in a

kind of taking a long march or walking from Karawang District to the Presidential Palace in Jakarta. In addition, the more extreme collective actions taken by STTB in this case were the self grave actions in front of the Presidential Palace, Jakarta. Adults and children had carried out the actions. Creswell & Poth (2016) also state that case study research is one of a qualitative approach in which researchers conduct real-life investigations, embedded or multiple case systems, and they collect detailed and in-depth data that get assistance from various sources of information (observation, interviews, audiovisual, and documents as well as various other reports). In this research, the interviews were conducted with three leaders of the STTB organization and three peasants as the members of the organization to find out the credibility of the STTB leaders.

3. Results

The peasant protest movement of United Telukjambe Peasants Association (STTB) began when they were involved in a conflict with PT Pertiwi Lestari. PT Pertiwi Lestari claimed that the rice field land occupied and cultivated by STTB peasants was their own land in 2010 and the company asked the peasants to move from the rice field land. Since then the lives of the peasants were full of tear and fear. The peasants had been experiencing discrimination and intimidation. The climax occurred in October 2016 when PT Pertiwi Lestari with the accompany of police force coercively evicted the local peasants, destroyed their land and houses, and arrested some of the peasants who made resistance. The peasants were forced to move from their cultivated rice field land and fled to Jakarta. Under the leadership of Maman, Aris and Dadi, the peasants of United Telukjambe Peasants Association (STTB) carried out many protest actions and reached a peak in March 2017 when they held a long march from Karawang to Jakarta. Moreover, they acted self grave in front of the State Palace of the Republic of Indonesia.

3.1 The Typologies of Narrators in the Peasants Protest Movement of The United Telukjambe Peasants Association (STTB)

Provide dates defining the periods of recruitment and follow-up and the primary sources of the potential subjects, where appropriate. If these dates differ by group, provide the values for each group. The peasants of United Telukjambe Peasants Association had carried out many protest actions to claim their rights to the land that PT Pertiwi Lestari had claimed and grabbed. The protest actions they had carried out both at the district level (in Karawang) to the national level (in Jakarta). These actions could not be separated from the role of the three leaders, i.e. Maman, Aris and Dadi.

Following is the identification of the typology of the STTB leaders as communicators based on the background of the three leaders.

Tabel 1. Typology of the STTB Leaders as Communicators

Communicator/Leader	Background	Communications Practices
Maman	The head of the STTB, a native son, a farmer's son, owns land in conflict land, a contractor	Persuasive message
Aris	Guidance and Advisor of STTB, national activist	Provocative message
Dadi	Chairman of BP-PAN, local activist, native son of Karawang	Storytelling and myth

Maman Nuryaman

Maman Nuryaman was a native son of the conflict area. The people in his village knew him. They called him Maman Cukil. He was a peasant child. His parents had occupied and worked on the four hectares of rice field land in the conflict area since the 1970s. His parents had passed on him to guard the rice field land. However, Maman was not interested in being a peasant. He decided to become a building contractor (project contractor). He did not live in his father's rice field land. He entrusted some peasants to guard and care for his father's rice field land.

Maman returned to his village when a number of peasants' rice field land in his village experienced damage, including his rice field land. He was astonished that some hoodlums of PTPL officers dared to damage his rice field land and the other peasants. With the SPPT (Tax Return) that was routinely paid annually, he was determined to defend the rice field land. He also established the United Peasants Association with his peasant friends who experienced the same problem with him. The United Peasants Association was legalized in 2014 and it changed its name to STTB (United Telukjambe Peasants Association).

Despite Maman did not come from activists or politicians, he was determined to defend peasants in his village. At the same time he also defended his father's inherited rice field land. He had experienced difficulties due to lack of advocacy experience for peasants. He also went to Aris Wiyono, the activist who lives in Jakarta, and he asked him to help in dealing with the conflicts with PTPL. Together with Aris, Maman became more solid. Maman supported the members of United Telukjambe Peasants Association not only in moral terms but also in material terms. He was willing to sell some of his personal assets when they had to flee to Greater Jakarta.

Aris Wiyono

Aris Wiyono was an activist from Solo but he lived in Greater Jakarta. He frequently had assisted peasants, urban poor people and workers to get their rights. In 2012, Aris assisted residents who were also the members of the United Tanah Merah Community Forum (FKTMB) to get the ID Card. He led the residents to demonstrate in front of the Ministry of the Interior Office to establish public toilet there. At that time Gamawan Fauzi occupied the position of Minister of Home Affairs. For the action carried out for almost a month, the FKMTB residents managed to get the ID card according to their domicile. He had also helped and assisted residents in Jambi and Riau to obtain HTR (Community Forest Plantation Permit) and HKM (Community Forest). As Maman and the representatives of the STTB peasants came to see him in Greater Jakarta to ask for his help, Aris immediately agreed. The activist's soul felt called to help the STTB peasants, particularly when he saw mothers and children who at that time experienced discrimination from PTPL.

Dadi Mulyadi

Dadi Mulyadi was a native son of Karawang District and he was also the General Secretary of GMBI (Gerakan Masyarakat Bawah Indonesia/Indonesian Movement of Lower Society) in Karawang District. Moreover, he also served as Chairman of the BM-PAN (Barisan Muda-Partai Amanat Nasional/National Mandate Party Upholder Young Wing) in Karawang District. Similar to Aris, Dadi Mulyadi was a true activist. He began his career as an activist of SEPETAK, Karawang Peasants Union. Dadi was an activist who often defended the oppressed peasants.

His initial involvement with the STTB and PT Pertiwi Lestari conflict was due to his research on the conflicts experienced by peasants in Telukjambe. In order to finish his thesis at the Faculty of Law, he chose the theme of the land conflicts that occurred in Telukjambe. At that time, the conflict was a serious and big problem in Karawang District. In order to find the data he required for his thesis, he frequently came to the conflict location to make observations on the land conflict issues here. As a result of frequently meeting and observing at firsthand the issues that STTB peasants overcame, over time his social spirit and activist enthusiasm to defend the peasants grew, finally he was totally involved in defending the peasants considered his own family.

3.2 Leaders Communication Practices

In communication practice for the peasants protest movement, the leaders of the United Telukjambe Peasants Association as a communicator conveyed the messages to the peasants as audiences. Each communicator had his own type or characteristic when he shared messages to his audience. Despite he was lack of advocacy experience, as a native son he convinced the peasants to take part in the protest. He persuaded them to defend the land that is their right as peasants. He raised the ideas of the land ownership owned by the peasants. He persuaded them to be willing to join the STTB members and take part in the protest actions.

It was rather different for Aris. He was a national activist and he frequently had advocated a lot of peasants and marginal people. Despite he had a lot of advocacy experiences for peasants, in fact it was quite difficult for Aris as "outsider" to enter into the life of the peasants. He persuaded them to join the United Telukjambe Peasants

Association (STTB) and make protests. He explained Article 33 Paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution and the Basic Agrarian Law (UUPA) Number 5 of 1960. He also used some sentences containing the elements of incitement to arouse the peasants' anger, such as "Karawang District Administration favors the company".

Dadi, the local activist in Karawang, was knocked his heart to "help" the peasants of the United Telukjambe Peasants Association to obtain their rights. The "assistance" he provided to the STTB peasants was to continuously accompany them, particularly in difficult times like in refugee camps. Dadi came to entertain the peasants and so they would not feel bored and returned to continue their struggle of achieving their rights to the rice field land. He frequently came and shared stories with the peasants of the United Telukjambe Peasants Association. One of the stories he shared with the STTB peasants was the Kuta Tandingan story, the story that was also a myth for the Karawang people about the greatness of an empire named Kuta Tandingan.

3.3 The Credibility of Peasant Leaders as Communicator

From the typologies of communicators based on the background of communicators and the communication practices they carry out, each leader has his own credibility as a communicator. Maman was the leader and initial credibility communicator, i.e. the credibility of the communicator relating to the social status and the position of the communicator (Devito 2012). He was a native son who had a social status in the neighborhood. As a child of an old man with extensive rice field land in the village, other peasants respected Maman. He also had a high spirit of generosity. When the peasants of the United Telukjambe Peasants Association (STTB) experienced difficulties during the conflict, Maman did not hesitate to spend his personal money. Moreover, he sold his personal items and therefore, he could bring the peasants to the State Palace, Greater Jakarta. Therefore, he covered all their living expenses when they were in Greater Jakarta. This generosity was a positive character possessed by Maman as a leader and communicator and became a plus in the eyes of the peasants of the United Telukjambe Peasants Association (STTB).

Aris had a different credibility if compared to Maman. Aris was a leader and communicator of the derived credibility, the communicator credibility relates to intellectual abilities and competencies the communicators have (Devito, 2012). At the beginning of his arrival in the midst of the peasants of the United Telukjambe Peasants Association, he was nothing. No peasant knew him. At the time he made the initial approach to the member peasants of the United Telukjambe Peasants Association, it was very difficult. However, after there was news that Aris was 'able to free' the STTB peasants having been criminalized by PT Pertiwi Lestari, he became famous among the peasants. His rhetoric abilities in front of the peasants began to make them trustworthy to him. He was considered a highly intellectual activist. He persuaded the peasants through giving them an understanding on the basis of the legal arguments, Article 33 Paragraph (3) of the 1945 Constitution and the Basic Agrarian Law (UUPA) Number 5 of 1960 concerning land rights for the people of Indonesia. The peasants of the United Telukjambe Peasants Association (STTB) believed that his intelligence was able to help them in reclaiming their rights to land that PT Pertiwi Lestari had usurped. Aris also had a closeness (proximity) with the STTB peasants. While older peasants considered him as a son or younger brother, younger peasants considered him as older brother and uncle among the children of the peasants of the United Telukjambe Peasants Association.

Moreover, Dadi was also a leader and communicator with the derived credibility. He had a unique character and he was a peasant activist in Karawang District. However, Dadi was not as famous as Aris. He was also not part of the environment among the peasants of the United Telukjambe Peasants Association. However, his ability to tell stories was a big asset for him to make the peasants feel comforted and get back to fight against injustice. The closeness (proximity) between Dadi and the peasants of the United Telukjambe Peasants Association (STTB) was also very close. He frequently stayed in the houses of the STTB peasants and moreover, they considered him as their family.

Tabel 2. The Credibility of STTB Leaders as a Communicators

Communicator/Leaders	Credibility	Dimension of Credibility
Maman	Initial credibility	Character
Aris	Derived Credibility	Competence, personality and dynamic
Dadi	Derived Credibility	Personality and dynamics

4. Discussion

Sinamo & Santoso (2012) state that a credible leader is a leader with high integrity and he uses his power ethically and morally, fairly and correctly for each of its members. The leaders of the United Telukjambe Peasants Association (STTB) applied such a leadership. They were leaders who upheld integrity and they had consistency in their actions. Since leading the United Telukjambe Peasants Association (STTB), Maman and Aris had tried to advocate for peasants and therefore, they could regain their rights to the land that PT Pertiwi Lestari had seized. However, despite there are leaders who dedicate themselves to defending peasants, the presence of a leader in the peasant movement frequently becomes a place to seek personal missions. This is illustrated in the research conducted by Wahyudi (2005) that there are two different motives for peasant movement leaders, i.e. leaders with norms oriented, i.e. land reform for the common interests of peasants, secondly for the self-interest of the leaders themselves in a kind of social and political power.

Hartoyo (2010) finds that there is a conflict of interests between leaders in the peasant movement. This conflict of interest occurs when each leader scrambles to gain profits in a kind of controlling power and profits simultaneously. The occurrence of conflicts of interest between leaders in the peasant movement certainly makes peasants confused. In organization of the United Telukjambe Peasants Association, the conflicts of interest between leaders were not found. Otherwise, fellow leaders shared tasks for the interests of their members.

The popularity of a leader as a communicator is proven to be added value. It is found in the research conducted by Pratiwi, et al. (2019²). The involvement of artists and activists in a peasant movement is one of the communicator strategies and therefore, people are interested in participating and involved in a movement. Cangara (2014) states that there are three conditions that must be possessed if you want to be a communicator, i.e. the level of credibility, attractiveness, and strength. These three conditions are found in Mahatma Gandhi. The credibility of Gandhi is no doubt. It also has an appeal due to his popularity. He also has political power (Kumar, 1983). This is what makes Gandhi acceptable as a communicator and leader.

In fact, Aris had the three conditions despite he as in different versions. He had credibility, appeal and strength. His ability to advocate had been proven. Thanks to these abilities, Aris was known to many circles and even to the level of a minister who already knew his performance. He also has power because with the network he had built so far. However, in practice, all these conditions did not necessarily make Aris immediately acceptable among the peasants of the United Telukjambe Peasants Association. The peasants required real proof related to the issues they were facing at that time. After Aris succeeded in bringing home a number of the peasants having been criminalized, Aris was able to be accepted among the peasants of the United Telukjambe Peasants Association. This proves that credibility, attractiveness and strength are not enough to be a condition of a communicator, and it also prevails to a leader. For some individuals or groups, real proof is a must and therefore, they are stimulated to participate in a movement

5. Conclusion

The credibility of the STTB leaders as a communicator in the peasant protest movement is in a kind of the initial credibility and derived credibility. The social status and competency of a peasant organization leader have added values and so the peasants participate in the protest movement. However, the peasants still need tangible proof of a leader's performance. Credibility without evidence becomes an obstacle for the peasants to trust their leaders. Evidence of work will make it easier for leaders to persuade the peasants to join the organization and protest

movement. This research certainly still has many shortcomings. Further researches are required to identify what messages the organizational leaders conveyed when they mobilize their peasants and therefore, they are willing to join and participate in the protest.

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